

In the Claims

Please cancel Claims 1-40, 42, 44, 46-52.

Please amend Claims 41 and 45 as follows:

41. (Twice Amended) A method of identifying an agent which enhances the activity of an ~~isolated~~ [a] caspase or procaspase expressed in immature thymocytes, or an active ~~derivative~~ or fragment thereof, wherein said caspase is necessary for apoptosis, comprising the steps of:

- (a) contacting the isolated caspase or procaspase, or an active derivative or fragment thereof, with a caspase substrate in the presence of the agent; and
- (b) identifying enhancement of caspase or procaspase activity.

45. (Twice Amended) A method of enhancing [a] <sup>enzyme</sup> the activity of an isolated caspase or procaspase expressed in immature thymocytes, or an active derivative or fragment thereof, wherein said caspase is necessary for apoptosis, comprising contacting said isolated caspase or procaspase with an agent that enhances the activity of the caspase or procaspase.

Please add the following new claims:

---53. The method of Claim 41, wherein the enhanced activity results from enhanced conversion of procaspase to caspase.

54. The method of Claim 41, wherein the enhanced activity results from enhanced oligomerization of the caspase.

55. The method of Claim 41, wherein the enhanced activity results from enhanced expression of procaspase or caspase.

56. The method of Claim 41, wherein the procaspase or caspase activity is prolonged.

57. The method of Claim 41, wherein the procaspase or caspase activity is increased.
58. The method of Claim 45, wherein the enhanced activity results from enhanced conversion of procaspase to caspase.
59. The method of Claim 45, wherein the enhanced activity results from enhanced oligomerization of the caspase.
60. The method of Claim 45, wherein the enhanced activity results from enhanced expression of procaspase or caspase.
61. The method of Claim 45, wherein the procaspase or caspase activity is prolonged.
62. The method of Claim 45, wherein the procaspase or caspase activity is increased.

63. A method of identifying an agent which enhances the activity of a caspase or procaspase expressed in immature thymocytes, or an active derivative or fragment thereof, wherein said caspase is necessary for apoptosis, comprising the steps of:

- (a) contacting the caspase or procaspase, or an active derivative or fragment thereof, with biotin-DEVDamk in the presence of the agent; and
- (b) identifying enhancement of caspase or procaspase activity.---

#### REMARKS

Prior to entry of this Amendment B, Claims 41 and 45 are pending in this application. No claim is allowed.

In this Amendment, Claims 41 and 45 have been amended, and new Claims 53-63 have been added. The amendment of the claims is for the purpose of more particularly pointing out the subject matter which Applicants regard as their invention, and for the purpose of expediting prosecution. The amendments should not be construed as agreement with or acquiescence to any of the pending rejections.

Support for the amendments and new claims can be found throughout the specification, the claims and the figures as originally filed. Specifically, support for the amendments to Claims